Human Events *A Weekly Analysis for the American Citizen*

Editorial Office 1323 M STREET, WASHINGTON 5, D.C. *Telephone* NATIONAL 2066

VOL. III, NO. 49, *Issue Number* 149, DECEMBER 4, 1946 ★ *Editors:* FELIX MORLEY & FRANK C. HANIGHEN

AMERICA AND HIROSHIMA

By Kiyoshi K. Kawakami

One sultry summer day, in 1863, a small American merchantman had ploughed its way through the Inland Sea of Japan and was about to emerge into the open sea through the narrow straits at Shimonoseki when, like a clap from the blue, the shore batteries opened fire upon the unarmed craft. Luckily the ship suffered little damage and lost no lives. Almost simultaneously a French gunboat and a Dutch sloop were attacked in the same locality, not far from now world-famous Hiroshima.

The Lord of the Chosiu fief, of which Shimonoseki was the chief port, had taken it upon himself to close the Inland Sea to all foreign ships, a challenge to the treaties of amity concluded with Western nations by the Shogunate, the central magistracy.

To punish the recalcitrant feudatory the three nations concerned, joined by Great Britain, sent against Shimonoseki a formidable fleet of warships; nine British, four Netherlands, three French and one American. In the brief engagement that followed the allied squadron lost only a few lives. Chosiu's defeat was swift and complete.

In the belligerency of Chosiu the Shogun had no part, but the powers held him responsible and demanded an indemnity of $3,000,000, at that time a staggering burden for an infant nation struggling to get on its feet. The American share in the total was $780,000.

Washington was never happy about taking such a large indemnity from so helpless a government for the nominal damage suffered. It was doubtful that President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward ever intended to use the money as a part of national income, for the fund was never turned over to the Treasury but was kept by the Department of State.

The United States was then represented in Japan by Robert H. Pruyn, a wise and farsighted man. Soon after the allied expedition to Chosiu Minister Pruyn, in a report to Washington, said:

> "I must confess this prince [lord of Chosiu] has my sympathy. . . . He has acted with consistency, vigor and boldness. He now desires peace, and his past history will probably prove a guarantee for his future sincerity."

Could any Samurai of old, with his vaunted Bushido, have written

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more chivalrous words? Pruyn, like his equally sagacious predecessor, Townsend Harris, took the enlightened view that Japan's welfare, if promoted through the friendliness of Occidental Powers, would ultimately redound to the interests of the latter.

II

In view of this sympathetic background it is not surprising that, in 1870, Professor Joseph Henry, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, started what was destined to become a national movement for the return of the Shimonoseki indemnity. He was the first to give expression to the latent uneasiness which had troubled many an American conscience from the time that the Government of the United States joined European powers in shackling Japan with a heavy indemnity for reasons of doubtful validity.

By January, 1873, the movement had crystallized into a memorial to Congress, signed by 452 prominent scholars and educators, urging upon that body the adoption of a resolution for return of the indemnity to the Japanese people. The sentiment expressed in the memorial was echoed throughout the country by newspapers, chambers of commerce and many other organizations.

In 1883, Congress, after a decade of intermittent discussion of the subject, finally resolved to remit $785,000 to Japan, with no conditions attached to the payment. Mr. Frelinghuysen, Secretary of State under President Arthur, forwarded the money to Tokyo "as an additional evidence of the friendly interest felt by the Government of the United States in everything that concerns the welfare and progress of the people and Government of Japan."

The United States was the only nation which took this generous action. The Japanese Government, desirous of perpetuating the memory of American magnanimity in some durable and appropriate form, used the money to build the breakwater in the harbor of Yokohama. Through this shelter from the open sea American visitors and American exports soon began to pour into Japan.

III

The happy outcome of the Shimonoseki incident comes back to my mind as I ponder the haunting pages of John Hersey's book unfolding an overpowering panorama of the inferno which, in the early morning of August 6, 1945, suddenly consumed a thriving city of 250,000 souls. The American reaction to the horror of Hiroshima is similar to, but infinitely more poignant than, that stirred by exaction of the Shimonoseki indemnity. Hiroshima has stirred to the depths not only the minds and hearts but also the very souls of men.

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When Mr. Hersey's story first appeared in the New Yorker, even the staid New York Times (August 29, 1946) was so "appalled" as to ask "if we could endure the burden of conscience if it ever again seemed necessary to us to drop atomic bombs, and we did drop atomic bombs, on a foreign city." And it admonished all Americans to read Mr. Hersey's Hiroshima, "for the death and destruction not merely of people and cities but of human conscience is clearly involved."

Perhaps the first clarion note sounded against the use of nuclear fission upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been given by Felix Morley exactly a year earlier (HUMAN EVENTS, August 29, 1945), while the stricken cities were still smouldering:

> "Because perpetrated by a nation that calls itself Christian, on a people with less lofty spiritual pretensions, eventual judgment may call our action ethically the more shameful, morally the more degrading of the two [Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima]. Unless we find some way of expiation, future missionaries to Japan will have difficulties in rationalizing the atomic bomb."

President Robert M. Hutchins, of the University of Chicago, denounced the atomic bombings as inhuman, unnecessary, and in violation of International Law. Were strategical reasons the only consideration which moved Admiral William F. Halsey to term them "an unnecessary experiment"? Dorothy Thompson, in one of her syndicated articles, wondered if "the dropping of atomic bombs on the open cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a war crime." George Bernard Shaw, in a letter to the London Daily Express, warned the judges of Nuremberg that "after dropping atomic bombs on helpless civilians without warning we are hardly in a moral position to hang any one."

Small wonder, then, that various American churches at their conventions continue to pass resolutions condemning the atomic destruction of the Japanese cities. As reflection deepens, more and more resolutions of a similar nature will be adopted. Meanwhile, Mr. Hersey's story has sunk into the hearts of millions of Americans. The stain seems ineradicable.

IV

Can nothing be done to ease American minds in this matter? As if in despair the New York Times says: "History is history. It cannot be undone."

It is here that I recall the American magnanimity in the matter of the Shimonoseki indemnity. Would not a similar spirit shown the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki cancel much of the ghastly history? If a group of distinguished Americans should come out with an open appeal for an American contribution toward rebuilding the two cities they

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would surely be joined by many like-minded citizens throughout the country. The ground is prepared, the soil is receptive, the time is now ripe for the sowing of the seed.

One may even envisage a petition, signed by hundreds of distinguished citizens, urging Congress to vote funds for the purpose indicated. Such a petition, even if unlikely to be acted upon at once, would prove the moral tonic so much needed by the survivors of the atomic disaster, of whom so many are still maimed, sickened, dazed.

At the same time a movement could be launched to raise funds through private contributions to help rebuild Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Such an effort would make a profound impression upon Japan.

Meanwhile, Hiroshima is not supinely lamenting its fate. Its mayor recently told a correspondent of World Report that "we are resolved to rebuild our city as a monument to peace." The city he envisages "is a model one, with all factories on the outskirts, beautiful residential districts, expansive parks and a modern commercial harbor. But this still is nothing more than a dream."

Will Americans help make that dream a reality as a monument to "good will toward men"? To do so, in the spirit of the Christmas Season, could only help the spirit of peace envisaged by the mayor of shattered Hiroshima.

That, clearly, is the opinion of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. In a report on the atomic bomb prepared by a special committee of 20 last March the Council said:

> "To rebuild Hiroshima and Nagasaki would be to restore only a small fraction of what our strategic bombings needlessly destroyed. To provide specific aid for the survivors of those two murdered cities would be hardly more than a token of repentance.
>
> "Yet we believe either would have lasting value for future human relations. The former task would require public funds or a large public subscription. The latter could be undertaken by the churches of the United States, and we hope that at least so much may be done."

I have no doubt that these noble words will in due course be implemented by deeds. My almost half a century in America has convinced me that its Government and people, in spite of occasional lapses, mean to be fair and just. Looking beyond the clouds which momentarily hang over our troubled age, I can still say with Browning: "God's in His Heaven, All's right with the world."

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. III, NO. 49

By Frank C. Hanighen December 4, 1946

The Government's suit against Lewis and his miners is based on rather dubious grounds, in the opinion of some legal circles in Washington. The Department of Justice rests its case on the Krug-Lewis agreement of last spring, one clause of which is ambiguous, leaving uncertain the question whether there can be unilateral termination of the Government-UMW contract. Professor Edward S. Corwin of Princeton reportedly calls this point "a fatal and congenital defect." Others believe that the Government should have invoked the Smith-Connally Act, which they claim would have provided a more solid foundation for litigation.

The attorneys of the United Mine Workers have made a very impressive case against the use of the injunction, although Judge Goldsborough has dismissed their plea. Their case, however, may prove persuasive in an appeal to the Circuit or Supreme Court. The Judge ruled that the Norris-La Guardia Act does not apply to a case in which the Government is involved. That Act prohibits the use of the injunction in labor disputes. The UMW counsel marshalled some important evidence on the intent of Congress in passing the law. In the parliamentary battle over its passage in 1932, several amendments were offered expressly to exclude the Government from its operation, but they were all defeated. This shows clearly, in the opinion of some neutral lawyers, that Congress' purpose was not to exempt the Government from the sweeping provisions of the Norris-La Guardia Act. Judge Goldsborough, on the other hand, who was a Member of Congress when the Act was passed, maintains that no amendment was needed because Government exemption was taken for granted.

There is important objection to the loose employment of the phrase "sovereign powers." The courts, it is pointed out, have made a distinction between "sovereign functions" and "proprietary functions" of the Government. Minting money, raising armies, conducting foreign policy fall in the first category; actual Government participation in business in the second. And in this latter case, the courts have applied the same rules and principles of law as are applied to private persons and private groups.

What is most disturbing is that the present dispute has been widely presented in terms of a conflict between the State and an Individual -- that is, the United States Government vs. Lewis. At a time when, in this country at least, there is a developing trend towards limiting the powers of the State and strengthening the freedom of the individual, the press and public opinion in the coal dispute generally support the side of the State. Some, who would welcome victory for the Government for its immediate benefits to the country's economy, fear that such a victory might establish a dangerous precedent. In this connection, they are reminded of what de Tocqueville wrote over a century ago: "Hitherto, no one in the United States has dared to advance the maxim that everything is permissible with a view to the interests of society; an impious adage which seems to have been invented in an age of freedom to shelter all the tyrants of future ages."

* * * * *

When Chiang Kai-shek last week talked about resigning, not many observers took his remarks seriously. Students of China compute that, since his advent to power in 1927, he has threatened to retire exactly sixteen times. It is more than a habit. Chiang probably calculated that such a statement would serve to rally behind him, at least for a time, elements recenty critical of his rule. The latter might well decide that it were better to retain Chiang than to try to navigate the troubled

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waters ahead without the old and experienced pilot. No other leader has the qualifications to take over the Generalissimo's position and to hold the squalling factions of the Kuomintang together. Chiang, with a sublety unknown in the American political arena, knows how to spread the notion that he's the "indispensable man."

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"So weak and corrupted is our Army in Germany," exclaimed a Pentagon official with -- we hope -- more heat than accuracy, "that the Germans today could revolt and overthrow our rule. I mean it. There are enough munitions hidden away, and a sufficient number of free SS men to do the job. Of course, they wouldn't do it; it would only let the Russians in, and they don't want that. But that is the condition of the American occupation forces today." This outburst helps to provide a key to the current mystery about the War Investigating Committee. That body enigmatically withholds the report of its counsel, George Meader, on Germany, and votes down a proposal to investigate further. The Army is so ashamed and discouraged with its performance in Germany that it wants to toss the hot potato of governing Germany into the arms of the State Department; and Mr. Meader actually quotes Secretary of War Patterson's recommendation for such a change in his unpublished report.

The lofty and reproving attitude of Mr. Byrnes, in urging that no more probes be carried on in our European marches, is his way of blocking the Army design; of preventing his State Department from being shouldered with the burden of scandal, corruption and inefficiency which is now the Army's. Publication of the Meader report and its recommendations, and further muckraking beyond the Rhine, might -- Byrnes obviously fears -- result in that transference of power. The State Department, whether through guile or stupidity, refuses to recognize that the Army's function in Germany is policing, not government, for which it is not fitted. The tragedy is that neither Mr. Byrnes nor Mr. Patterson seems to recognize that our policy in Germany is still intrinsically that of Morgenthau and that new directives and a fresh constructive start, with less vindictive personnel, is required to commence the essential task of rehabilitation, which we assumed with the policy of Unconditional Surrender.

* * * * *

Edwin W. Pauley's blueprint of Japanese reparations, just made public, if strictly followed will be somewhat like throwing the baby out with the bath water. The American reparations "expert's" recommendations woud mean the removal of about three fourths of Japanese iron, steel and machine-tool industries; all magnesium, aluminum and synthetic oil plants; as well as 50 per cent of the electric power facilities. Also, Japan's merchant marine must be limited to steel vessels of not more than 5,000 gross tons, with a "workable minimum tonnage" of 1,500,000 tons. How Japan's population, swollen by many decades of industrialized social conditions, could survive this purgative awaits explanation from the "consulting economists" who presumably advised the oilman-world statesman.

Official circles are privately apologetic about the Pauley plan. They say that some plan, after all, had to be produced "for the record," after a year of occupation. They confess that, if such removals of machinery as contemplated were made, there is really nowhere in the Far East where it could be sent and set to work. Neither in the Philippines nor in China are there the skills among the population to operate the machinery. If these reparations were carried out, rusting iron alone would be the result. Only the Japanese in the Far East know how to run these machines.

It is pointed out that Russia, on the other hand, carried out its reparations policy -- or "war booty" policy, to use the humorous Slavic term -- more intelligently. Russia transported a large part of Manchurian industry to Siberia, but

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took sufficient Japanese slave labor to operate it. Since the infinite mercies of our State Department can hardly include sending the Japanese back to China after thoroughly repatriating them, the real official, unannounced plan seems to be to let the Pauley blueprint lapse as a dead letter -- and let MacArthur continue to run his show as he thinks best.

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A noticeable phenomenon in the Washington scene since November 5 is the reappearance of ideas not accorded respectful consideration here since the heyday of the New Deal. Of a "conservative" character, these ideas have quite naturally arisen from the political trend towards conservatism. The reverse was true fifteen years ago when the return of the Democrats was attended by a clamorous rebirth of radical ideas -- funny money notions, free silver, "share the wealth," etc.

A new, or rather a new-old, approach to the problems of taxation marks this renaissance. For many years, the Rooseveltian theory of taxation seemed to possess more than a slight touch of sadism. Certainly it was influenced more by social than revenue considerations. Today, the Republican promise of lower taxes is perhaps not unmixed with the grosser calculations of politics. But, it is only fair to say, the Republicans claim that a tax reduction would be in accord with sound old economic principles. They remind us that the Republican regime in the Twenties by a progressive lowering of taxes so "encouraged business and commerce" that Government income rose and the debt of the last war was reduced by about one third in the course of the decade.

Long unfamiliar conceptions are indeed abroad. The other day, we heard one Republican figure, usually classed with Senator Morse and the Republican "Left," expounding his contribution to the Republican "revolution." He advocated eliminating all corporation taxes, on the ground that such taxes are passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices. His plan, he argued, would lead to lower prices, thereby promoting mass purchasing power. But, he warned, such a measure must be accompanied by a revived "undivided profits" act to force corporations to disgorge their surplus into the pockets of stockholders. And he would place the tax burden on the latter.

* * * * *

The Argentine Government, we learn from authoritative sources, has granted a sizable loan to the Peruvian Government. When this news reaches the ever vigilant PM or other similar journals, we may expect grim predictions that the loan is but the first step in a Perón "plot" to dominate Peru. Whatever the sins, mortal or venial, which the present Argentine regime has committed against democracy, we doubt that any such motive prompts this transaction. Peru has minerals which Argentina lacks, and the latter has foodstuffs desired by the former. In any case, is not this loan symptomatic of what has been called the "gargantuan" prosperity of Argentina, spilling its surplus over into the territories of its neighbors?

Carleton Beals, in a recent striking series of articles in The Progressive (September), describes the buoyant economic conditions in the La Plata republic and offers a defense of its relations with other South American countries. "The new regime [Perón's] has consistently worked to cultivate closer and more friendly relations with Brazil, Chile and Bolivia. It has consistently sought to reduce trade barriers. It has loaned money for constructive non-military development in those countries: for oil, in Bolivia; for iron and steel, in Chile, etc. Most of the propaganda against Argentine militarism is of Communist origin. In a secret directive sent out to party sections . . . Communists were ordered to spread the story that a secret military alliance existed between Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay to attack neighboring countries."

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Notes and Quotes

". . . If colliers [coal miners] should leave their masters without consent, they would be esteemed, reported and held as thieves of themselves and of cowardice for leaving such masters. . . ." So runs a King James I statute (1606), as quoted in the Baltimore Sun by C. P. Ives, who says that this is one of John L. Lewis' favorite prose passages. The masters, moreover, were to have power "to lay hold of all vagabonds and sturdy beggars and compel them to work at the pits. . . ." Mr. Ives, noting demands for drafting Lewis' miners concludes that "the cycle of labor policy has come full turn."

Between the forced coal mine labor of Stuart times and the indignation of American editorial writers in 1946, there was a long transition from compulsion to freedom. In 1775, King George III emancipated the Scottish miners, the last true slaves in Britain. "That was just one year before the publication" remarks Mr. Ives, "of a book by a Scottish clergyman which stated the whole new liberal idea in the realm of economics. The Scottish clergyman was Adam Smith and his book was The Wealth of Nations. . . .

"How superbly it [the liberal idea] worked in practice is suggested by the fact that the modern industrialisms of Britain and America which have led in the industrialization of the world rested at base on the post-Adam Smith methods of mining coal. Could the same quantities of coal have been mined by the slaves of the older time? Almost certainly not." But, Mr. Ives warns, "the long swing of the cycle away from compulsion has now produced a labor policy whose trouble is not that coal is produced inefficiently; its trouble is that over long periods coal is not produced at all."

* * * * *

Henry Hazlitt, long with the New York Times, has moved to Newsweek, where his fine talent for probing economic fallacies appears in the following quotation (December 2): "With the ceilings removed on wages and materials, on everything that goes into a house, it becomes administratively and economically absurd to maintain price ceilings on new houses. That is the best of all ways for assuring that they will not be built. For the same reason it is obvious that rent ceilings of any kind should be removed on new housing. The only way to solve the housing problem, the only way to bring down rents in the long run, is to increase the supply of housing. The quickest way to increase the supply of housing is to provide the maximum incentives for its production. It is preposterous that the only major thing on which we should continue to squeeze down the profit margin is precisely the thing of which we are most eager to increase the supply."

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"Poland is the largest country in the world," according to the latest joke in Warsaw. "Its frontiers are on the Oder and Neisse. Its capital is in Moscow. And its population is in Siberia."

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